discussions relate broadly to acquisition/modernisation of defence equipment, maintenance and spares support, etc.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Naval-Exercise in South China Sea

5497. SHRI P PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Navy has drawn up an ambitious plan to exercise a Kilo-class submarine and a maritime reconnaissance aircraft in the South China sea sometime this year;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether the implications of the proposed exercise in India's relationship with the countries bordering South China sea have been considered in all its ramifications?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Naval exercises in the South China Sea involving a Kilo-class submarine and a maritime reconnaissance aircraft have not been planned for this year. However, Indian Naval ships on goodwill visit to friendly foreign countries conduct passage exercises with the Navies of the host countries as a matter of routine. A goodwill visit by the Naval ships including a submarine, to countries of South East Asia and East Asia is planned during September/October 2000. Passage exercises are proposed to be conducted during the goodwill visit. While the submarine may also take part along with the ships in such passage exercises, no maritime reconnaissance aircraft is scheduled to take part in these exercises.

Pak's advancement into Indian Territory

5498. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Pakistan troops relocate guns at Siachin glacier" as appearing in the 'Hindustan Times' dated 25th April, 2000; and

(b) if so, what are Government's reaction thereto and the steps proposed to prevent Pakistan from making further advance into Indian territory?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Artillery fire by Pakistani troops into Indian territory including base camp in Siachen sector is an ongoing feature. Constant vigil is maintained on the border and all appropriate measures have been taken to thwart any attempt of misadventure on the part of our adversaries.

Purchase of Anti-Tank Guided Missile by China

5499. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report appearing in the Hindustan Times dated the 19th March, 2000 that 'China has covertly tried to buy one of US Army's most effective weapons, the Hell fire anti-tank guided missile from Egypt';

(b) if so, the salient features of this missile; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to raise materialising defences to ensure peace and security in the region?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The AGM 114 missile, manufactured by the Lockheed Martin Corporation of the USA is commonly referred to by its NATO code name the "Hellfire". It is an air-to-ground laser guided anti-tank missile with a maximum range of 5000 meters and a minimum range of 300 meters. The missile is capable of a penetration of 900 mm of rolled homogenous armour. The missile is in use, *inter-alia*, with the Israeli, US, Swedish, Egyptian and NATO forces.

(c) Government keeps a close watch on all such developments which have a bearing on national security and appropriate measures are taken from time to time to ensure full defence preparedness to meet the emerging challenges.

Upgradation of MIG-21 Aircraft

5500. SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the upgradation programme of MIG-21 BiS is well behind schedule;